

**ADVISORY PANEL
Motions and Rationale
June 2-5, 2025 - Newport, OR**

C3c Pelagic Trawl Gear Definition

AP Motion 1

The AP Recommends that the Council take final action and select Alternative 2 as the preferred alternative and revise the definition of pelagic trawl gear by selecting the **bold language** as the preferred Options and Suboptions.

Added language is underlined and removed language has ~~striketrough~~.

Alternatives

Alternative 1: No Action (status quo).

Alternative 2: Revise the definition of pelagic trawl gear to:

Option 1: Specify that the limitations on flotation and metallic components are not applicable to the codend. codend is excluded from the restrictions applicable to pelagic trawl gear.

Option 2: Remove outdated text related to parallel line trawls.

Option 3: Allow the use of flotation. ~~aft of:~~

~~— Suboption 1: 5.5 inch stretched mesh, or~~

~~— Suboption 2: 15 inch stretched mesh.~~

Option 4: Allow instruments 1) capable of observing, or monitoring the fishing gear, catch, fishing activity, or fishing environment, 2) capable of adjusting the catch, and 3) lights, to be attached to pelagic trawl gear. Floats, capable of providing up to 100 lb (45.3kg) of buoyancy, may be attached to or within 6 feet of each instrument.

Option 5: Allow the use of metallic components. (AMENDMENT) ~~in the following locations:~~

~~Suboption 1: Forward of the fishing circle.~~

~~— Suboption 2: Aft of the fishing circle and forward of:~~

~~a) 5.5 inch stretched mesh, or~~

~~b) 15 inch stretched mesh.~~

~~Suboption 3: Aft of:~~

~~a) 5.5 inch stretched mesh, or~~

~~b) 15 inch stretched mesh.~~

Amendment passed 18-1 (bold italic strikethrough text)

Amended Main Motion passed 17-2

Rationale in Support of Amended Main Motion

- *The AP noted the motion is responsive to both the purpose and need and the agency's request to update the regulatory definition of pelagic trawl gear. It accurately removes obsolete language, updates the definition to reflect modern gear advancements, improves compliance and enforcement, while also leaving room for future gear innovation.*
- *Pelagic trawl gear has evolved since the definition was last updated in 1993 due to council actions focused on conservation and sustainability goals. Taking no action would conflict with those goals, as well as trawl fishermen's efforts for efficiency, bycatch reduction, and innovation. The motion accurately reflects the gear currently being used in the fishery and brings critical components such as salmon bycatch excluders into compliance.*
- *The alternatives and options selected are responsive to public testimony.*
- *The pelagic trawl gear definition revisions in alternative 2 are intended to fit into 679.2 and 679.24 as staff have laid out in the EA/RIR on pages 84 and 85.*

Rationale Specific to Alternative 2, Option 1

- *Codends were not historically intended to be limited by the regulatory definition of pelagic trawl gear.*
- *Floats and metallic components in the codend are essential for safety during deployment, retrieval and transfer, maintaining stability and correct orientation of the net, and reducing gear damage and tangling.*
- *Maintaining current regulations would require costly impacts to the pelagic trawl gear users if the definition is not revised.*
- *Adopting Option 1 avoids needing to revise the complex process of NOAA regulation 600.10, because this change would only apply to codends on pelagic trawl gear.*

Rationale Specific to Alternative 2, Option 2

- *The AP heard from public testimony that there is no interest in returning to parallel line trawls since parallel line trawls are less efficient than modern gear designs and are no longer in practical use.*

Rationale Specific to Alternative 2, Option 3

- *Flotation is a lifting element, not a concern for conservation or seafloor contact.*
- *Allowing flotation in any section of the gear provides a clear enforceable regulation, flexibility to accommodate current gear configurations, allowance of the use of salmon excluders, and room to facilitate innovation and technological improvement.*
- *The intent and expectation of option 3 is to allow fishermen to make practical use of flotation in their pelagic trawl gear.*

- *The historic rationale for restricting floats (referenced on page 18 in the EA/RIR) is outdated due to the current use of modern, efficient gear, including midwater trawl doors.*

Rationale Specific to Alternative 2, Option 4

- *Common types of instruments that option 4 would allow include: Live-feed and recording cameras, sonar and net sounder systems, catch sensors, door sensors, lights, and technology and instruments that can adjust active bycatch excluders.*
- *These tools allow skippers to accurately judge codend fullness for safer and more efficient hauls, monitor catch per unit effort and salmon excluder function, and collect environmental data (e.g., water temperature, salinity, etc).*
- *Technology and instruments have been and continue to modernize. Allowing for instruments in pelagic trawl gear, also allows for improvements and updates to the instruments that lead to reliability and durability.*
- *Since Option 3 allows flotation anywhere in the trawl, the specification regarding placement of flotation is no longer necessary.*
- *The previously proposed prescriptive buoyancy limits (in pounds) are also unnecessary and difficult to enforce.*

Rationale Specific to Alternative 2, Option 5

- *The intent is to promote and allow practical and efficient metallic component use.*
- *Metallic components should be allowed where they are necessary, which should be up to the fishermen and gear experts.*
- *A general allowance of metallic components – rather than prescribing types of metallic components – is more objective and enforceable. The AP heard from extensive public testimony that it is prohibitive to weigh down the codend with too many metallic components since it would lead to damaged fish product and destroyed fishing gear. Additionally, costs of excessive weight include decreasing efficiency and increasing fuel costs, impede water flow which affects salmon excluder function and catch of target species, and gear damage.*
- *Forward of the Fishing Circle: Metallic components forward of the fishing circle are already allowed and essential for modern gear. Ground gear restrictions (e.g., bobbins, rollers, discs) remain unchanged and are not affected by this allowance.*
- *Aft of the Fishing Circle and Forward of 15" Stretched Mesh: Allowing metallic components in the mid-section supports proper net shape and flow, fishing efficiency, bycatch excluder device function, and can provide the structure necessary to minimize costly damage to the gear, especially when going over the stern ramp of the trawl vessel.*
- *Aft of 15" Stretched Mesh: Metallic use in this section is important for salmon excluders that require calculated amounts of lead lines to maintain shape and function, safe codend transfers to motherships which require metallic connectors and potentially strengthened line. Metallic components aft of 15in stretched mesh are essential for achieving conservation goals and national standards like minimizing salmon bycatch, maintaining efficient and effective gear operation, and achieving OY.*

Rationale Opposition Amended Main Motion

- *None provided.*

Rationale in Support of Amendment

- *The amendment simplifies the structure utilized in the motion by matching the changes regarding metallic components with the original motion's changes regarding flotation.*

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- *The motion maker noted that this amendment maintains the original intent of the motion and clarifies a simple oversight in motion structure.*

Rationale in Opposition to the Amendment

- *None provided.*